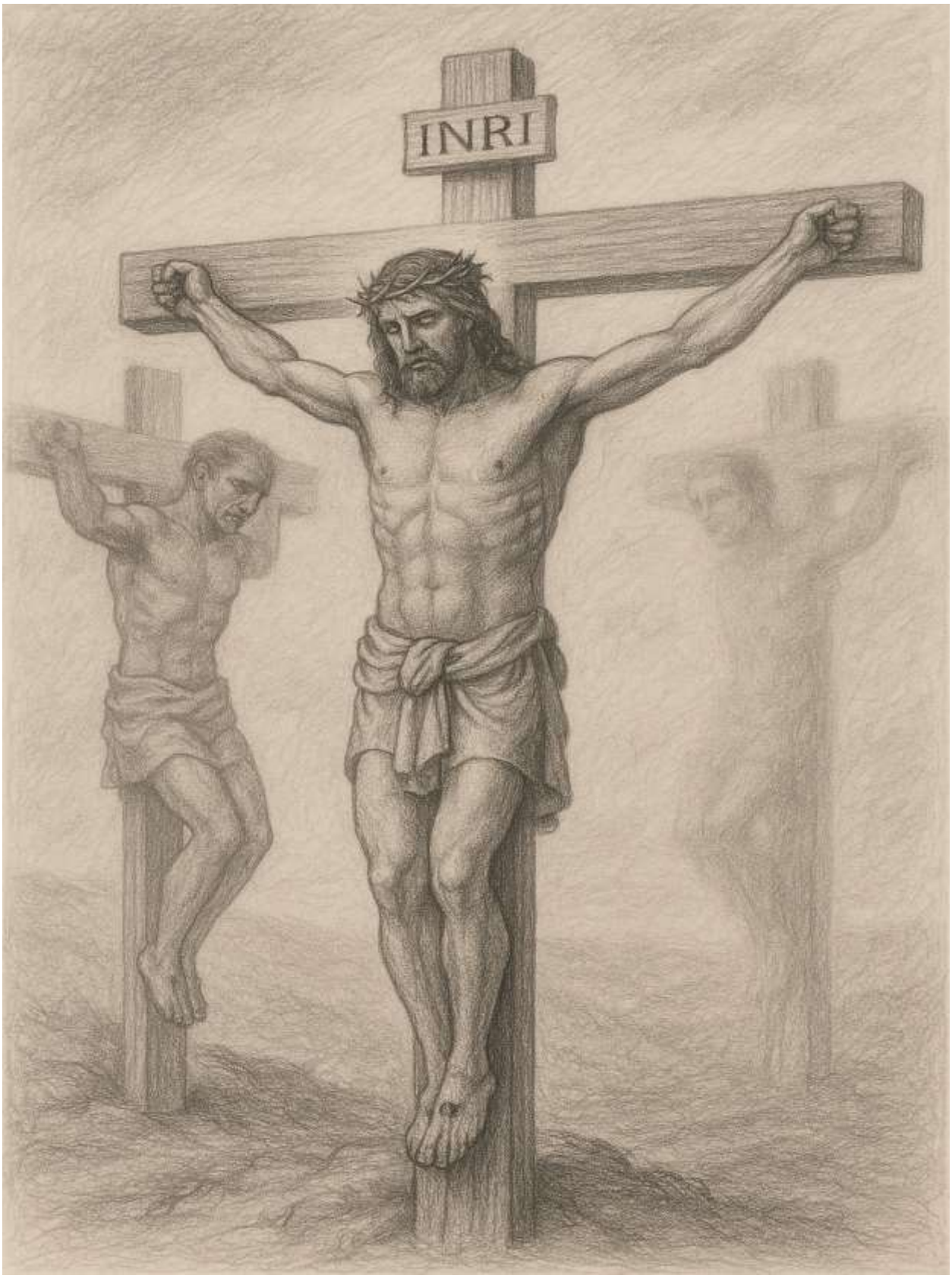
INRI

The Simple Cross

"Thank you for those who inspire me to write this Book. Thank you God for your word, for your son and spirit. I want to say Thank you to my family. My heartfelt thanks Goes to my dear friend Yesem Dereje who has been pushing me to write this. Thank you for being my inspiration, for your feedback and comments."

"Scriber: Yeabkal Abebe"

The Beginning

Giving birth and dying are fundamental laws for humankind. No one can break this law. Even if someone says, “I will not die,” death will not spare that person. All who have said this have died without exception. So, if it is said that humans were created only to die, that would be shocking. Death is inevitable, but there must be something that exists before and after death. Otherwise, birth would have no meaning. There is one book that teaches us the meaning of life and shows us that life and death have value beyond mere existence. That book is the one I am writing now. You must have a little laugh on what I said. How many of us know that Ethiopia is the only country that has punctuation for sarcasm. That would be surprising! When punctuation and sarcasm go hand in hand. There is only one book that truly knows yesterday, today, and tomorrow: the Holy Bible. Anyone can write or speak about the past, and some may also talk about the present. But there is no one who can reliably tell us about the future except the Holy Bible. Therefore, let me say a little about this book. It is a collection of books and letters written by people over a span of 1,600 years. It is a book that have life, meaning, and power. Although it was written by humans, its origin is from the mouth of God. The speaker is alive, thus his word is alive. Jesus explained that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive, and since their God is alive, they are alive too. The one who spoke the word is alive, and the word itself is alive. Even today, it provides answers to our problems. So, we will see in this book what does this bible say about mankind. Human Creation, the purpose of life, how humans fell, and the steps taken to save humanity are all briefly outlined in this book.

In the Beginning

In the beginning, God created man from the dust of the earth. Then He took a rib from his side and created woman. After that, He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God instructed them to eat from every tree in the garden except the tree that distinguishes good and evil; they were told not to eat from it. “On the day you eat from it, you will surely die,” He warned.

*Genesis 2:[16]And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;[17]**but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die**.”*

- “Excuse me, writer?”
- “Yes?”

- “You have slightly altered the story.”
- “How so?”
- “Eve was created after the command was given.”
- “What do you mean?”
- “As Genesis 2 tells us, God gave the command to Adam after He created him. Eve was created afterward.”
- “Okay, continue.”
- “No, you continue. I’m just here to keep you from making mistakes.”
- “Alright.”

God gave Adam a command after He created him. Then He provided a suitable helper for him. In that garden, they were husband and wife, but before their creation, there was a creation that has a problem with God and his creations. Then resembling a snake, this creations began to tempt Eve. From her, women learned that final outcome of disobeying God: death. The serpent was crafty and cunning and deceived Eve by twisting the truth. Their conversation went like this:

Genesis 3: [1]Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”[2]And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; [3]but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”[4]Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. [5]For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

The serpent said, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?” (This marks the beginning of Satan’s temptation through forbidden things.) Eve replied, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said not to eat or touch the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, or we will die.” The serpent contradicted this, saying, “You will not die. In fact, God knows that when you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will know good and evil, just like Him.” A good husband teaches God’s word with love. Either when Adam told her God’s commandment wasn’t attentive or Adam told her in some wrong way, we don’t know that, Eve told the serpent half of the command. First, God said not to touch the tree. Eve was the one who added that command. Second, God did not say they die, he said they would **surely** die. Eve made

some addition and slightly take out some important aspects from God's command. Then she looked at the fruit and admired its desirability.

Genesis 3:6 "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate".

Satan always makes forbidden things appear attractive. Eve took the fruit and went to Adam, and they both ate. Their eyes were opened.

- "Writer?"
- "Yes?"
- "You missed again?"
- "How? They both did eat, right?"
- "They certainly did. But Eve ate first and gave it to Adam."
- "And?"
- "She ate first, but her eyes were not opened. Adam's eyes were opened when he ate. This is an important part of the history you are telling."
- "How so?"
- "Adam……"

In the Beginning of the beginning

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. In doing so, they broke God's command and committed sins. Sin refers to any act that goes against God's commandments. It means rejecting God, saying, “You are not the one I serve; I am in charge of myself.” Therefore, there is no place for sin with God. In the household where we live, our parents say that as long as you live under their roof, you must live by their rules. If we live outside their rules, the solution is to leave their house. Likewise, God's solution for sin is to remove sinners from His presence. When Eve heard that God said, “You shall surely die,” it meant death was the consequence of their disobedience. The wages of sin is death. Wages mean payment. When a person works, they expect payment or salary. Similarly, sin demands its payment. Because sin is an action, not a feeling, it carries a penalty.

Ezekiel 18:4 “……The soul who sins shall die.”

But then, Adam and Eve did not die the day they ate the forbidden fruit.

- Excuse me, the writer?
- So, what did I miss now?
- Adam and Eve died the day they ate.
- How?
- Death does not only mean physical death.
- Then what?
- In the Bible, death also means separation.
- So the singer was right when he says that death means separation.
- Indeed! Adam and Eve died a spiritual death; they were separated from God. The Bible describes three kinds of death. The first death is when your soul separates from your body. This is what we call physical death. The second is spiritual death, which means separation from God due to sin. This happened when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden; they lost God's glory. The third death is eternal death—being separated from God forever because of rejecting Jesus.
- So, what happened to Adam and Eve then?
- They died spiritually the day they ate. When God expelled them from Eden, they died spiritually, separated from Him. Physical death followed gradually.

- Okay, continue
- ----------

In the Beginning 2

- Adam?

Adam is the representative of all of us. When Eve ate, her eyes weren't opened, but when Adam ate, his eyes were open. Not only Adam but also Eve's eye too. Adam represents all mankind. God has a law called the law of representation. For example, in our country, the law we live by is representative law. We elect representatives. The name "House of Representatives" itself shows that there is representation. The decisions made by these representatives are considered the people's decisions. Similarly, any decision made by Adam was for all people. Because Adam was the representative of all human beings, every decision he made was binding on us. Adam's decision introduced sin to us. The Bible explains that sin and death entered through Adam. Sin came first. Death followed.

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned…"

Death followed sin because death is the payment for sin. So, the decision Adam made us aware of death. The reason is that we are descendants of Adam. When Adam's child is born, he carries Adam's lineage. All descendants of Adam are his children. Therefore, anyone born is born into physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. Everyone is born into spiritual and eternal death. Over time, physical death occurs.

Romans 3:23: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

- So, what has shall we do?
- ----------

In the continue

Until now, we have observed that every person born is entirely under the power of death. So, if a great Creator left all humanity under the dominion of death, it would be a heavy burden for everyone. Moreover, to let everything created subjected to death is vanity. Therefore, there must be a way for humans to escape death. When we ask the Holy Scriptures what this way is, it reveals a path to us. Before we examine this path, some people ask why God does not abolish the law of death. The law itself cannot be abolished. The one who gave the law is God, and He is faithful to his law. However, when a better law comes, everything will be established on that better law. For example, the law of Gravity still exists. Anyone who believes it no longer exists can try to jump off a building. Furthermore, the law of of Gravity doesn't need to proclaim or utter it existence as it is something that can't be ignored. So, when the laws of Bernoulli's and Newton's came, which are higher than the law of gravity, they allowed for transportation from one place to another within hours by airplane. Thus, the law is not abolished but replaced by a better law. The law says that the wages of sin is death. No one who has died can come back to life. Therefore, another law was necessary. This is the law of substitution. The law of substitution means that God allows one person to die in place of another. Based on this law, I can die for another person. What God wants is for sin to be paid for by death. If I am a hard worker and have a better wage, and asked my brother to take my wage, my brother won't say, "No, I will not take your wage." Since the salary is good. Thus God allows the payment of wages for another's life. But the wage is death. Separation! Death means separation — the absence of life. Life is in the blood. If someone says, "Show me life," there is nothing to show but blood. Life exists in the blood. Therefore, the wages of sin is death. Death means separation. To be without life means the shedding of blood.

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Knowing that my wages is death, no one else can accept it for me. There are two reasons for this: first, death is my wages; second, no one can defeat death. Therefore, it was necessary to find something with a life that has blood. Accordingly, the wage was given to animals. Because they have blood, they do have life. Shedding their blood means, they take my wage and I am set free. Thanks be to God!

Before I finish praising my Lord, I have two problems. First, people do not stop sinning. Every sinner's sin wages is death. Therefore, I must live with offering an animal in place of my sin. God wants me to repent and change of my heart; He does not want me just to offer an animals. If God needed animal's blood, since all animals belong to Him, and He would have killed them all to take their blood. But God did not give the law to Israelis aiming to kill animals so that people would live in as their heart wishes. Second, the animal's blood was only enough to remove the sins of people for one year. Since that was not sufficient, an eternal solution was needed.

In the end

Based on the representative law of Adam, all of us are born carrying the sin or identity of Adam. No one has been taught how to steal. No parent teaches evil to their child. Rather, "Do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not lie," and other commandments are taught to children. Why do children commit these? Because every child is born carrying the sinful nature inherited from Adam. Therefore, even if the law and animals came to save this worthless creation, it was not enough. Moreover, God has no compromise regarding sin. God desires to dwell in the human heart. But sin blocks Him. God had three options: first, to destroy all humans as sinners; second, to punish all sinners without mercy; third, to accept the wages of our sin. The first would contradict God's love nature, as He would not destroy all humanity. The second would contradict His justice, since He cannot forgive without payment. Thus, He chose the third option.

saiah 59:16 "He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him".

In history, the Son who is God came to represent us on earth. He came to live a foundational life like us. Jesus came without breaking the law but fulfilling it. In His identity, He was both God and man. God and man met in history in Jesus. In Jesus, God was in human flesh; in His divine nature, He is God. Therefore, this God had to fulfill the role of animals. In the time of the Israelites, the annual sacrifice was a lamb. When Jesus came, He knew He was going to die. That what he meant when he says my food is to do the will of my father. Doing the will of His Father meant giving His own life.

John 4:34 "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

Before His death, He spoke about his death also.

Matthew 16:21 "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

In His final hours, He was distressed and troubled because death was near.

Matthew 26:37 "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed."

His death was not for one year for one person. According to Israelite sacrificial law, a person must offer a sacrifice for their sin. If there were 600,000 people, one lamb per each people, there would be 600,000 lamp required for one year. Jesus came to be that all lamb. But He came not only for the Israelites but for the whole world. From birth, Jesus bore the sins of the world. Finally, the time came to fulfill His Father's will. The all-knowing God was betrayed, rejected, and mocked, just like the lamb slaughtered by those who did not understand him. He became the pure lamb. Based on God's law, He died for us. Being pure, He took our death upon Himself. Taking our wages means taking our death. He gave His own life by dying. So, what have we gained from this cross? Just the death of a lamb? Or God becoming a lamb in the flesh?

I am righteous in Jesus

The Holy Bible, in the book of Zechariah, shows us a courtroom. The arrangement of the courtroom resembles the setup of a courtroom in Ethiopia. There was a priest named Joshua in those days standing before the Angel of the Lord in God's courtroom, while Satan stood at his right side, ready to accuse him.

Zechariah 3: "[1]Then he showed me ***Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him****. [2]And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" [3]Now* ***Joshua was clothed with filthy garments****, and was standing before the Angel."*

Just like Joshua, you and I have stood in this same kind of courtroom since the moment of our birth, because of the sins of Adam from whom we descended (Romans 5:19 and Psalm 51:5), and because of the sins we ourselves have committed (Ephesians 2:1). We stand clothed in filthy garments because of sin.

Psalms 51: "[5]Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, ***And in sin my mother conceived me****."*

*Romans 5: "[19]****For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners****, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."*

Ephesians 2: "[1]And you He made alive, ***who were dead in trespasses and sins****,[2]in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience…,"*

The judge in this courtroom is God Himself. Satan, fully aware of this courtroom, has stands accused before. The Bible, in Isaiah 14, describes how Satan—called the "Son of the morning"—was cast down from heaven.

Isaiah 14: "[12]"How you are fallen from heaven, ***O Lucifer, son of the morning****! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! [13]For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; [14]I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' [15]Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the*

lowest depths of the Pit. [16]"Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, [17]Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?' [18]"All the kings of the nations, All of them, sleep in glory, Everyone in his own house; [19]But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot."

In this court, Satan was cast down to the earth because of the work he did against God. Eternal death was decreed for him. Therefore, this court knows that Satan received eternal death as a result of committing the sin of pride. God hates pride, as He has revealed to us through Satan. Because of this, when we commit sins, Satan, who understands that God does not tolerate sin, accuses us and drags us to the court where he was condemned. This is why he is called the accuser of the brethren/brother.

*Revelation 12:10 'Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brethren**, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. '*

Because of this, eternal death was passed on to us as well. Indeed, Satan has overwhelming evidence against us, which God cannot deny. Therefore, death has been decreed upon us. While in the courtroom, we cannot defend ourselves because the evidence is overwhelming. We are sinners. Even if we had a lawyer, he would not be able to overcome the evidence. Under these circumstances, Jesus came as our Advocate, having died in our place.

1 John 2:1 "[1]My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

In some courts, judges recognize different types of advocates. There is one who never takes a false case and is always ready to defend and plead the cause. God's courtroom knows the Advocate. Jesus, who died our death on our defense, speaks on our behalf, saying: "By His blood and His cross, I have conquered the sinners -you and I- death." There are three kinds of death, as we have seen. Death means separation—it is not something to be taken lightly. So, if we ask which of these deaths have been lifted from us the answer would be All three! Spiritual death means separation from God. On the cross, Jesus took that separation upon Himself and made us alive with God

again. The Spirit of God is alive in us. Through Jesus' death, I am alive. Life has been planted within me. My God is alive. He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

*Romans 5: "[2]**through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*

Therefore, I say, I am righteous in Jesus. From that courtroom you are pronounced free. Jesus tooke my position and I take his. Jesus took the penalty of my sin, my death, upon Himself. He did one thing for me: He took my death. Not only he took my death, but also he did something amazing. He gave me His righteousness.

*2 Corinthians 5: "[21]**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**."*

While Jesus lived in the flesh on earth, He fulfilled the law completely. To be righteous means to be right before God. Jesus was righteous before God. He took our sins and died our death. He gave us His righteousness. I did not survive death by my own power—I am made righteous through Jesus' work on the cross.

*1 Corinthians 1: [30]**But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— [31]that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord**."*

I did not have the lineage, religion, reputation, knowledge, or ability to be righteous. But through faith in Jesus, trusting His work on the cross, believing that he is my advocate I became righteous. He took my death and gave me new life, a life that cannot be taken away. He also give me a right to have a flesh that is incorruptible at the last trumpet.

*1 Corinthians 15: "[51]Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—[52]in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed."*

Through his work, those who died in sin spiritually have now seated at the right of God. Paul says that Jesus conquered sin and death and is seated at the right hand of God.

*Ephesians 1:"[20]which He worked in Christ when **He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right** hand in the heavenly places,…."*

Following this, we too are seated with Him by faith. Jesus is at God's right hand. To be at God's right hand means to stand rightly before God. God has declared us righteous in Jesus.

*Ephesians 2: "[6]**and raised us up together, and made us sit together** in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,…."*

Therefore, I am righteous in Jesus. Jesus is my Advocate. He took my death. All my sins and their penalties were lifted from me. Without faith in Him, I would face the second death and eternal death. But through the cross, I am made pure and righteous.

*Revelation 20:"[6]Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. **Over such the second death has no power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Satanic Rebellion Crushed…."*

There is nothing of mine that can qualify me as righteous. Instead, without knowing it, by my unbelief, sins, and death, Jesus took my place, forgave me, and made me righteous by His cross. Blessed is the child of God!

Jesus Has Redeemed Me

In the world, the great and beloved conquest known as the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire was completed in 1532. On November 16, 1532, Atahualpa, the ruler of the Inca Empire, agreed to meet with foreign visitors who were few in number compared to the vastness of his empire. These foreigners were Spanish conquistadors led by Francisco Pizarro, who commanded 160 soldiers. They attacked and captured the young Inca king. Atahualpa proposed to give his captors a ransom in wealth; he offered a treasure valued at 1.5 billion dollars (in today's currency). Upon fulfillment of this ransom, the king himself was expected to pay a ransom in silver to secure his freedom. The reason was that once captured, he became a slave of Spain. The tragic history we learn about today shows that even if this king had offered so much silver to the Spaniards, he was eventually executed. Likewise, we are all servants of sin through our actions. Indeed, in these times, understanding slavery is difficult. We were all born in an era of bondage despite being created for freedom. Many of us, when hearing the word "slave," think of the history of Black African slavery. Some might even think of Abraham Lincoln. Yet, the issue of slavery precedes America who hasn't aged 500 years. The Holy Bible explains how slavery existed in the time of the Israelites, detailing how slaves were supposed to be treated and managed, as recorded in the books of Moses. So, when a person thinks about the word "slave," they may consider it someone who is under control of people, but no one truly understands what it means to be a slave of the spirit, sin, and actions. The Jews of Jesus' time did not comprehend this either. However, Jesus said in John 8:31–32, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

*John 8: [32] And **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**."*

Often, the dialogue between Jesus and the Jews is one of my favorite. The Jews knew that Jesus meant that they are slaves. That's why there immediate response was we are the child of Abraham, we are not slave to anyone.

*John 8: "[33]They answered Him, "**We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone**. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"*

Then he responded who commit sin, is slaves to sin.

*John 8: "[34]Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits sin is a slave of sin**.""*

A slave belongs to someone else and has no ownership of his own. We were slaves to sin and death because we chose to stray from God's way. In ancient times, slaves were traded and sold in markets. Their owners set the price and sold them to the highest bidder. Our price was death, and death was our penalty. Anyone prepared to die for us could claim ownership over us. Just as the young king had to pay a ransom to free himself, so too must our price be paid. The life of every person is in their blood. Therefore, Jesus, being human, gave His life for us and paid our ransom with His blood. Our full price was paid by His blood. It was not the blood of a lamb, a bull, or any other animal, but the blood of God made flesh, the creator of the world and all things.

*Hebrews 9: "[12]**Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption**."*

Another important point is that our price was paid to God Himself. We were in dispute with him do he let us to sin's bondage, but Jesus paid the price to free us. Therefore, we have been redeemed at a great cost. Redemption means paying a price to gain freedom. This is why the Bible says, you were bought at a price; you are not yours but God's.

*1 Corinthians 6: "[20]**For you were bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, **which are God's**."*

Jesus has fully paid our price. There is no other blood that can pay it. He paid it once and for all on the cross. Because we believe in Him, we have been freed from sin's bondage. Sin no longer has power or authority over us. In the market of slavery, once a slave was sold to a new master, that new master had full rights over the slave. Likewise, because Jesus paid our price, He has full rights over us. He bought us with His blood, and no one else can claim us. He has redeemed us with His precious blood. Because of this, Jesus has made us free. However, this freedom does not mean we live as we please; rather, we are free to serve God and do His work. Jesus has purchased us with His own blood. If anyone tries to enslave you, they must pay the price. Our previous price was death, but now our price is Jesus' blood. Therefore, anyone who wants to claim you must pay the price Jesus has paid. There is no better price than Jesus' blood. Nothing of equal value exists on earth. So those who believe in Him have been made redeemed forever by His blood, once and for all, and are no longer slaves to anyone except Jesus. Sin, Satan, and worldly ideas are not masters over us. Jesus Himself has redeemed us with His blood and made us His own. In the presence of the Lord God, He has declared us righteous, purchased us with His blood for a holy

life. Because our price is Jesus' blood, no one else can reclaim us. Jesus is our price. God gave His Son to bring us back to His glory and presence. We are redeemed by His blood, not by our own efforts. The blood that has redeemed us. We can never be lost from the new master since we are bought by blood that never perish.

1 Peter 1: [23]having been born again, ***not of corruptible seed but incorruptible****, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,.."*

Jesus has redeemed me by His blood, and I am free to live for Him.

I have found propitiation in Jesus

Until now, there is one thing that can be understood clearly as we have seen so far. Every person has fallen into enmity with God because of the sin inherited from Adam and our own sins. The result of this enmity is well known. God is the Creator of heaven and earth. When we enter into enmity with Him, our ultimate end is death — this is clear. Because of this enmity, God's wrath is greatly provoked. Therefore, this anger must be appeased. We cannot live by being righteous alone. Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden. Eden is the place of full fellowship with God. To be with Him means there must be access granted. For that reason, God must turn away from His wrath. It is in this context that Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice to appease God's wrath and entered into fellowship with God. In the Scriptures, it is common to send a gift in advance as a way to prevent anger. For this reason, the story of David and Abigail is sufficient to illustrate this. Although Nabal was a worthless man, his wife Abigail sent a handmaid with a message ahead to David, turning away God's wrath from him.

1 Samuel 25: " [32]Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! [33]And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand."

So, what did Jesus carry to appease God's wrath? He carried Himself! The author of Hebrews reveals this in chapter nine, referring to a specific place called the Holiest of all.

Hebrews 9: "[3]and behind the second veil, ***the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All****,…"*

In the time of the Israelites, the high priest entered the holiest of All only once a year to offer sacrifice for his own sins and those of the people.

Hebrews 9: "[7]But into the second part ***the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance****;.."*

When the sacrifice was accepted in this place, God's wrath would return from Israel. Jesus, therefore, entered this place by offering Himself as a sacrifice. Although Jesus did not enter the earthly tabernacle, He entered the heavenly one before God by offering Himself.

*Hebrews 9: "[24]**For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for u**s;…"*

God's wrath remains on sinners. There is no human means to turn away God's wrath. God is righteous, and He must punish sin. The punishment is death. Therefore, no matter how one lives their life—whether they keep the Sabbath, fast, pray, or regularly attend church—they cannot remove God's wrath caused by their sins. Even if one perfectly obeys the whole law, they cannot turn away God's wrath. Obedience to the law is only possible through faith. In fact for those who rely on the law are under curse.

*Galatians 3: "[10**]For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them**."....."*

The consequence of this curse is death. Furthermore, no person can extinguish God's wrath on behalf of another. All have sinned.

*Romans 3: "[9]What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. **For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin**……. [23]**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**,…"*

No one who has lived on earth is without sin. Therefore, all are under enmity with God. There is no place where God resides in fellowship with us. God does not desire sin. God is the God of wrath and fire. Noone can say, "God will not punish you if you do good in life." To say God will turn away His wrath because of how I live is to say I am under the curse. Therefore, someone who does not know sin must present a sacrifice to appease God's wrath on our behalf. That is why Jesus came to earth. As a human, He did not know sin.

*2 Corinthians 5: "[21]For He made Him **who knew no sin** to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him…."*

Therefore, Jesus offered His pure body as a sacrifice on the cross. The annual sacrifice became the flesh of Jesus. Since the creation of the world, God's wrath for sin has been placed on His Son. God received the sacrifice of Jesus' death. Jesus carried His own body to the *Holiest of All* for all

the people of the world. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God's wrath has been removed. Therefore, anyone who believes in Jesus has no wrath from God.

*Hebrews 9: "[25]**not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another**—[26]He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages**, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** [27]And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, [28]so **Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many**. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."*

As we have seen, enmity with God comes from the sin we inherited from Adam and our personal sins. Even if we do not commit sin, we are descendants of Adam and were accountable for Adam's sin. When someone asks, "Why should I be accountable for Adam's sin?" the answer is the spiritual world works on representation law and the whole world is in enmity with God because of it. When Haile Gebersilassie-Famous Ethiopian runner- won a gold medal at Olympics, it was Ethiopia that won the race. Since Haile is the representative of the country. Adam was our representative. If someone says, "I do not elect Adam to represent me," God is the one who made Adam a representative of mankind. God chose Adam to represent us, but Adam still fails. If God chosen Adam fails, imagine what it would be if we choose our representative. Now, however, the representative has changed. Our new representative is Jesus. He is human and can represent us effectively.

*Romans 5: [12]Therefore, **just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned**—[13](For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. [14]Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. [15]**But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many**. [16]**And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification**. [17]For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive*

abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

Jesus is life. Through Adam, sin entered; through sin, death came; through Jesus, righteousness entered; and through righteousness, life came. So, when Paul says the gift is not like the offense, God is referring to how through one man's sin many died, but through one man's obedience in Jesus Christ, many receive life. Those many who were sinners because of Adam's transgression now, by Jesus, escape the wrath of God. Yes, because of Adam, we were dead; through Jesus, we have been made alive. Just as no one chose Adam but was bound to sin through him, through jesus whether we believe him or not, has had the wrath of Adam's sin removed from them.

However, there is still a problem: we are not only sinners because of Adam but also because of our own sins. The sin brought to us by Adam is overcome by the life given through Jesus. But for our personal sins, we must repent and trust Jesus. We can't blame Adam for our death anymore. For Adam's sin death Jesus gave us life. Now, God calls us to account for our personal sins. To remove God's wrath from our personal sins, there is only one assurance: the death of Jesus. Whoever does not believe this faces God's judgment. Jesus paid the full price for God's wrath. The Hebrew book writer says that when Jesus had freed us from sin by His sacrifice, He sat down at the right hand of the God/Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 1: "[3]who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, ***when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high****,…"*

Jesus offered His blood as atonement. So, what about when we make sin now? Jesus is the eternal High Priest, not only serving on earth but also in heaven.

Hebrews 7: " [25] Therefore ***He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them****…."*

For the sin we make now, the work of the cross, Jesus' death, and His flesh atone for it. Jesus is forever our High Priest and our only mediator. Even now, the atonement for the sins we commit is based solely on the blood of Jesus, who died over 2000 years ago. It is He who stands before God to cleanse us from sin. John says don't make sin, but if you do you have advocate before God.

1 John 2: "[1]My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, ***we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous****....."*

This advocate is trustworthy and righteous. Why do we need an eternal advocate? Because we have a relentless accuser-the devil. God is righteous and must judge sin. The punishment for sin is death. But death has been conquered through the death of Jesus. Therefore, our advocate constantly shows the blood He paid for our redemption. Because our sin is always presented to God by our accuser, our High Priest stands beside us forever. Because Jesus lives forever, the security I have received from God is guarded by His power. Thank God! I have not earned this redemption by my works. But through faith, I have been clothed with the advocate in the heavenly sanctuary forever. Now, having faith, God's advocate stands for me freely. The advocate and the judge work together in my defense.

I am reconciled with God through Jesus.

In the Holy Bible, among the well-known stories from the Old Testament are those of David, Solomon, and Job. David is famous for the story of Goliath. Job is known for being tested through his wife, and Solomon is known for having 1,000 wives and living in his palace. Job's trial was not easy. In fact, his wife urged him to curse God and die. But Job refused to do so. However, deep inside, Job had one question. He wished there was someone who could stand as a mediator between him and God. In Job chapter 9, when Job raises this question, we see:

*Job 9: "[33]**Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both**.."*

The mediator Job wanted was someone who could fairly represent both sides. The reason is that Job, by himself, could not approach God. Like Job, every human being longs to draw near to God but is unable to because of sin and seeks someone to mediate. This is why Jesus came as a man. John speaks about this matter, saying that the Word became flesh, full of grace and truth, and dwelt among us.

*John 1: " [14]And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth**…."*.

Jesus is the way of reconciliation between God and man. Because of sin, the world was separated from God. Some ask why God just simply reconcile with us. God is a God of both love and wrath. He cannot ignore sin without punishment. The punishment is death. But because God is also a God of love, He desired to take upon Himself the punishment that man deserved and be reconciled with us through Jesus. Thus, He sent Jesus to earth. The question is, when did He send Him? The Bible tells us that even while we were weak and sinful, Christ died for us.

*Romans 5: "[8]But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**….."*

Being sinners means that we were fallen because of sin. God did not wait until we were worthy to love us. Instead, out of love, Jesus gave Himself, offering His life to reconcile us with God. He gave Himself to die even the death of the cross for sinners.

*Ephesians 2: "[14]**For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one**, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, [15]**having abolished in His flesh the enmity**, that is, the law of*

*commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, [16]and that **He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity**…."*

No one can rise up and reconcile God by their own power. The idea of reconciliation originates from God, not from man. The Bible, in Isaiah 59:16, describes how God, seeing that no one would intercede, brought His own arm brought salivation, and that arm is Jesus.

*Isaiah 59: "[16]**He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him**; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him…"*

Jesus, in His identity, is both fully human and fully God. The Hebrew writer repeatedly refers to Jesus as the mediator between God and man. Saying Jesus is the mediator means that there are two sides: on one side, the world and us; on the other side, God. Jesus, through the cross, reconciled those two sides. Paul explains this to Timothy:

*1 Timothy 2: "[5]For **there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus**,…"*

One thing is clear: Jesus is the sole mediator. A mediator must know the case between two sides to resolve the issue. Therefore, Jesus knows the human side because He is human, and He knows God's side because He is God. He understands the test of sin because He is a man, and He also knows God's stance against sin because He is God. Jesus ate and drank like a man. He was tempted by Satan. As God, He took worship as God. He knows what is required to reconcile from God and what was expected of man. He died the death required for sinners. He was crucified. He is the one intrecced and intercieding for us. He has fullness of God becoming flesh reconciled us through his death. When paul explain this said by his death he reconciled all things on earth or in heaven.

*Colossians 1: "[19]For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, [20]and **by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross**…."*

The blood Jesus shed on the cross is the blood of peace. Paul tells the Romans, who were once enemies of God, that even while they were enemies, they were reconciled through the death of God's Son.

*Romans 5: "[10]**For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more**, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life…."*

One thing is clear: Jesus reconciled everyone by his crucifixion. No one else can mediate. The reconciliation He achieved is through the blood of the cross. Now, I and God are friends. Enmity between us has been removed. God is no longer a God who comes to punish me, but my God who comes to help me. Although much has been written on this subject, the Hebrew writer states that Jesus is the one mediator of the new covenant.

*Hebrews 9:" [15]And **for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions** under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ….."*

Do not be confused. The peace we have through Jesus' death is true. God will not condemn me for my sins nor punish me as in the old days of judgment. Jesus has become my best friend. When we sin, we find mercy in the blood of Jesus. We have an eternal mediator. The peace Jesus brought is eternal and steadfast. For him, by him, to him we are reconciled. I and God are friends.

I am sanctified in Jesus; I have been sanctified and will be sanctified

In human life, especially within family life, having a child is a significant event. When a child is born, it is always customary to bathe and clean the newborn to keep it free from dirt and illness. Similarly, when a person accepts Jesus as their Savior and Lord in the house of God, they become like a new child. Paul, speaking about this matter, says that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

*2 Corinthians 5: [17]Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new…."*

Indeed, the concept of being a new creation does not imply a vague idea but has a clear meaning. To put it simply, being new means the old has passed away. The Hebrew writer explains that when a person accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the old, corrupted self dies and is replaced by a new creation or child. Previously committed sins are completely forgiven by God. Now, the person is pure and renewed.

*2 Corinthians 5: "[17]…. **old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new**."*

So, God does not want us to remain as children forever. Rather, we need to grow up in the house of God. When we grow up in God's house, we mature and grow like a child who grows and develops. Because the blood of Jesus continually cleanses us from our mistakes, we are purified. However, we should not live wandering in filth; we must separate ourselves from it. We need to live in a pure place, to grow, and to learn. Living in purity, taking care of ourselves spiritually, and returning to a pure place is our responsibility. This idea directly leads us on the path to holiness. To be sanctified means to be set apart. When God says, "Be holy," it means to be set apart for Him. To be separated from sin and to live for Him. The problem is, I cannot make myself holy on my own. The first requirement for holiness comes from God Himself. It is God who begins by saying, "I am holy," and thus He declares me holy.

*Leviticus 19: " [2]Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You **shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy**.."*.

We cannot become holy as God's standard on our own, separate from God. This is unthinkable. For this reason, the only solution is Jesus, the Lion of Judah. During the time of the Old Covenant,

Pharaoh of Egypt oppressed the Israelites severely. God told Pharaoh to let go his people he didn't listen, even though different punishments were inflicted. Therefore, God sent the angel of death to bring judgment on Egypt's first-born living thing, but commanded that the angel of death would not touch those who marked their doorposts with the blood of the lamb. The blood of the lamb was a sign meaning that home is set apart for God. That lamb's blood saved the Israelites from death and set them apart for God.

*Exodus 12: "[5]Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. [6]Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. [7]And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. [8]Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9]Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. [10]You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. [11]And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. [12]'**For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. [13]Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt**…."*

Today, the blood of Jesus, which we believe in, sets us apart for God. Understanding sanctification through Jesus' works can be challenging because it is a lifelong process until death. Jesus' blood is active—past, present, and future—sanctifying us continuously.

I have been sanctified in Jesus.

I am holy in Jesus. Yes, it is astonishing. But that is the truth. I am sanctified and holy in Jesus. By believing in Jesus, I have died to my old self and have been set apart for God's work forever. The Hebrew writer says in chapter 10, verse 9, that through the body of Jesus (meaning His offered sacrifice), we have been sanctified once and for all.

*Hebrews 10: "[10] By that **will we have been sanctified through** the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. **Christ's Death Perfects the Sanctified**…"*

To be sanctified means to be set apart. The sanctified one is holy. This is the work of Jesus who conquered death and rose. He sanctified me and all who believe in Him once and for all. Peter also speaks on this matter, saying, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God..."

*1 Peter 2: "[9]But **you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**…."*

I am holy. Calling me His child has always been a great comfort and joy. Even now, one thought that moves me deeply in the house of the Lord is this: the work of the cross that make me holy and sanctified. Sin has been wiped away through the blood and body of Jesus. By believing, I have become holy. Paul speaks on this in 1 Corinthians 1:30, saying this sacrifice he is the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption for us.

*1 Corinthians 1: [30]But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, **who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption**."*

Our holiness comes from Jesus. Nothing else can sanctify us before God. Surely, Paul understood this when he wrote at the end of that chapter: "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." Many early Christians embraced Paul's teaching, including those in the church at Corinth, to whom it is believed that he wrote four letters.. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul says this about sanctification:

*1 Corinthians 6: "[11]And such were some of you. But you were washed, but **you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God**. Glorify God in Body and Spirit…."*

- Can you say it louder!
- You were sanctified!
- By what?
- By the name of Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
- But I am a great sinner!
- Let see who Paul is saying you were sanctified.
- *1 Corinthians 6: "[9]Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, [10]nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. [11]* ***And such were some of you****. But you were washed, but* ***you were sanctified……"***

I am being sanctified by Jesus

*1 Peter 3:"[15]****But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts****, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;…."*

Peter, in 1 Peter 2:9, calls believers a holy people, and again in chapter 3, he urges us to sanctify Jesus in our hearts. This is the essence of Christian life. Even if a person is holy in Christ, they must daily sanctify themselves before God. Sanctification means being set apart from sin. Once separated from sin, we must live daily for God. God, through Jesus, has separated us from sin and made us His own. No one is holy by their own power but only by His name and Spirit! However, as a sanctified people, we must live for the One who sanctified us. Christianity is a matter of life. Paul tells us to present ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

Romans 12: "[1]I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ***you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,*** *which is your reasonable service…"*

Every Christian has the Spirit of God within. This Spirit continually sets us apart to be like God. What we do as Christians is valuable because of the influence of our holiness. Someone who is not sanctified cannot truly serve God's work. The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. Many guests, including the weak, the crippled, and others, were invited to the feast. But one man came without wearing the wedding garment. At that time, the king ordered him to be thrown out to the place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

*Matthew 22: [1]And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: [2]"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, [3]and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. [4]Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." ' [5]But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. [6]And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. [7]But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. [8]Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. [9]Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' [10]So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. [11]"**But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. [12]So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless**. [13]**Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.'*

This parable is given for those who have received the invitation but have not put on holiness. We are sanctified by the blood of the Lamb. We have accepted His call. Yet, we must continually live sanctified before God. Without holiness, there is no relationship with God. This is why the apostles shouted without ceasing, urging us to live holy lives. What we do is not holy by ourselves. We are made holy by His blood. Our separation for God must be visible in our lives. A son may be lost, but he will return. So it is with a Christian. The name Jesus sanctified us, but if they stray from the path of holiness, their spirit and blood will return us to the road. They sanctify us daily. Paul, writing to the Philippians, says:

*Philippians 2: " [12]Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**;.."*

How come Paul says work out your own salivation that Jesus finished? Someone from Philippi reading this might say, "aren't you the one who says your salvation is done by faith and grace alone?" Yes, the work of the cross of Jesus' Son has been fully accomplished. But Paul says that

we must sanctify ourselves in truth, indeed with fear and trembling. Do not miss this! Nothing came from us for sanctification. Our sanctifier is the blood of Jesus. The sanctified one by the blood continually grow truthfully to God's truth.

I will be sanctified in Jesus

What we do is because Jesus came to take us. Or rather, our sanctification is when we die. We have been called to be like the Son.

Romans 8: "[29]For whom He foreknew, ***He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son****, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren…."*

In the end, we go to heaven to receive eternal glory with Jesus. Being separated fully for God means our sanctification is complete. Our sanctification is valuable—it is the prize and the crown. We must live a life free from blame and harm. To live this way, the blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts. We are sanctified by His blood and strengthened by the grace poured out through the Spirit. Christianity that haven't been rooted or shown in action will eventually perish before Jesus.

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!

There is one truth that every person living a Christian life must know. Anyone unaware of this truth brings joy to Satan. The reason is that although this truth seems simple, it is the truth that sets free. This truth is that Jesus died for us—those living in the world, those who have lived, and those who will live. So, whoever believes in Jesus' death becomes a member of the kingdom of God.

1 Peter 2: "[10]who once were not a people but ***are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy****. Living Before the World….."*

- Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.
- Now hold on a minute, when we say "believe and be baptized," does it mean we must be baptized to be saved? Must we be baptized to be saved?

Mark 16: "[16] ***He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned****…."*

Before answering this question, let us see what the Bible says. The passage above is from Mark 16:16. ***let us say Jesus said this, though most bible scholars doubt the genuineness of Mark 9:9-20.*** However, He also saved those who did not get baptized. So, does Jesus contradict Himself? Does this mean the teaching of the apostles is not correct?

The person crucified with Jesus

On the cross, two criminals were crucified alongside Jesus. Both Mark and Luke tell us in their gospels that both were mocking and insulting Him.

Mark 15: " [32]Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." ***Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him****. Jesus Dies on the Cross…"*

Both men faced the consequences of the choices they made in their lives, crucified on the cross. For a certain time, they mocked Jesus while He was dying, but after a while something unknown (it is the Holy Spirit) changed the one criminal mind. And claimed that We are crucified for our sins, and but He did no wrong. Then the conversation went:

Luke 23: " [39]Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." [40]But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do

*you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? [41]And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." [42]Then he said to Jesus, "**Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom**." [43]**And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise**….."*

Jesus is dying on the Cross. This man was dying with Jesus on the cross. So, what does "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom" mean? It means this man knew about Jesus; he knew Jesus would die and also rise again. He also knew that Jesus would come back in His kingdom. Because of this belief, he asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus' kingdom comes. Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Indeed, this man entered heaven through his faith in Jesus. Jesus carried him in His death on the cross. Salvation was complete—he believed, he spoke, and he entered heaven. So, did this man get baptized to enter heaven? I left the answer to the reader. If someone says what if he survived the crucifixion and got babtized I would like to invite that person to read about Roman's crucifixion.

Cornelius

*Acts 10: "[1]There was a certain man in **Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment**,…."*

In the time of the apostles, there was a Gentile (a non-Jew) who greatly feared God. The centurion and his entire household feared God. This was the situation. Peter was sent in a vision to go to the centurion's house. Peter had thought that salvation was only for the Jews; he did not eat with Gentiles. So when he entered this Gentile's house and preached the Word of God, the Holy Spirit came upon them.

*Acts 10: " [44]While **Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word**. [47]"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? " [48]And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days…."*

God gave the Holy Spirit as a guarantee and seal of salvation.

*2 Corinthians 1: " [22]**who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee**…".*

So, for this Gentile household, God gave the Holy Spirit as proof of their salvation. Their salvation was confirmed before baptism. But they were not baptized first? The Holy Spirit is God, and they were sealed by Him before baptism. Their salvation was confirmed. Many other examples could be given. For now, let us conclude on this and return to Jesus remark on Mark. What does it mean that one when Jesus says who believes and is baptized and saved? Salvation means being saved from eternal death. When our soul accepts Jesus, a transformation takes place within us. Salvation is an internal work. However, we must express our salvation outwardly. People need to know that we belong to Jesus. Therefore, a person shows their faith by being baptized publicly. I died a death like Jesus-death, and I take part of resurrection like Jesus- resurrection. Baptism is like identification. A person born Ethiopian to an Ethiopian father is Ethiopian. Whether or not he shows identification, his nationality does not change. Likewise, through faith in Jesus, we become citizens of heaven.

*Philippians 3: "[20]**For our citizenship is in heaven**, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,…."*

Jacob (James 1:18) says he brought us forth by the word of the truth. Therefore, where we are born, we also have citizenship. An Israelite's circumcision is proof of his nationality. Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness, says the Bible. So circumcision was a sign for the Israelites at that time, just as baptism is a sign for us to express our salvation. Baptism is not the way to salvation. I am Saying baptism is not beneficial. However, not being baptized does not mean we are lost. Baptism is not equal to the work of the cross. One may want baptism and get baptized, but baptism itself does not bring salvation. It is an open declaration of our faith to people.

Rejoice that your name is written in heaven -------2

Another thing that raises regarding salivation is; must a person work to be saved? And does a person's work cancel out their salvation? Let us look at what the Holy Scriptures say about this.

Must we do good works to obtain salvation?

Jesus is the source of our salvation. No matter what, we need Jesus for salvation. Doing works is our outcome. Among the passages that those who say a person must work to be saved cite is James 2:24. Let us examine this passage in comparison with other bible verses.

James 2:24 Vs with Romans 3:24, John 3:16, and Ephesians 2:8-9

James 2: "[24]You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only…"

Vs

John 3: "[16]For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life…."

Romans 3: "[24]being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,.."

Ephesians 2: "[8]For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, [9]not of works, lest anyone should boast."

When these Scripture passages are considered together, they seem contradictory but are actually very complementary. Some people recite James by saying a person is justified not only by faith but also by works. James who was the brother of the Lord Jesus and is believed to be the author of this epistle. The Bible, divided into chapters for our reading and application, is actually one complete epistle written by the New Testament writers. When someone say a person is justified by works, he has to see what John say. Paul, in his various epistles, says justification is by faith, not by works. So, are these books contradicting each other? No. Paul and John write about justification from God's standpoint. That means they distinguish justification from God's perspective and from man's perspective. God justifies a person when He sees faith in His Son Jesus Christ. To be justified means to be made right. Grace saves through faith and rescues. But James from standpoint of person, writes about the relationship between the people. Is a person's

faith real if it is not shown in their works? That is the question James asks. If a person comes hungry and asks the believer for food, but the believer does not share, and instead tells them to go in peace, that believer has faith in God but has not shown it in action. A person can be justified before God, but can this person be truly known to know God before men? It may be doubted because their faith is not displayed in works. John says in 1 John 3:17 that if a brother or sister has material needs and someone with faith sees it but does not help, how can God's love dwell in that person?

*1 John 3: "[17]**But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"***

How can a hungry person know that Jesus is your salvation? Feed them! How can a thirsty person know that you are doing God's just work? Give them a drink! Surely, a person who does this demonstrates the faith they believed and justified by. Your faith is revealed by your works before men. What you feed to others in Good work is not for salvation or justification. You only demonstrate the faith God gave you for salvation. If you do not reveal it, no one will believe. When James said that we are justified by works, he did not mean the justification that we have before God. Our faith in God's Son must be shown in our works. If our faith is not seen in our works, our faith shakes before men. Therefore, it is dead. Dead from whose perspective? From a human. But from God's side, it is the will of God that everyone who believes be justified. Because our justification is by Jesus, not by works. The verses above teaches as so. But if a person persist we must take verses at face value and thus justification is by work also, I have one question:

1 John 3: "[8]He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
*[9]**Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him**; and he cannot **sin**, because he has been born of God."*

As we see above, John says a person born of God does not to sin. It is not just that they do not sin, but they cannot sin. So, since you become God's child, have you stopped sinning, or are you not His child? I don't know…..

So if we only need to believe to be justified and if we believe and are justified, then we can lose our salvation by any work we do?

Salvation is a gift from God. It is not only a gift but also grace. A gift is something given to someone who deserves it. No one gives a gift to a person they despise. Grace, however, means giving an undeserved gift to someone who does not deserve it. The grace of Jesus cancel the death we deserved and give us the eternal life we did not deserve. This life is given to us through our faith. Just as a person who gives a gift does not expect to be repaid, God does not demand repayment for the life He has given us. Salvation of a person is not taken away from a person.

*Romans 8: "[33]**Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?** It is God who justifies. [34]**Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**"*

Paul asks an important question to Christians in this passage and answers it himself: Who can bring a charge against those God has chosen? The answer is very simple: Satan! If anyone having a hard time to conceptualize Christianity, understands this part it is enough for me. We saw a court before, during the time of the priest Joshua and the prophet Zechariah. But now, it is not Joshua who is accused, it is us. We have committed a crime punishable by death. The accuser, Satan, has finished reading the charges against us. But Jesus took that charge and judgment upon Himself. Therefore, the judge, God, declares you righteous. So Paul asks, who is the one who condemns a person whom God has declared righteous? The answer again is simple: no one. God is the one who declares me righteous by faith in Jesus, not by my works. Who will condemn the life God has justified and given me? Only God Himself. God is greater than Satan. Because I am united with Christ, I am called righteous. So if I am united with Christ, does that mean I can freely sin? What proof do I have that my life will not be lost? Paul continues his question: Who then is the one who condemns? The answer remains simple: sin. Anyone who sins remains under condemnation. But the courtroom has a defender—a lawyer. This defender, like us, lived and conquered sin as a human. He died, defeated death, and rose again. That defender is Jesus. He pleads on our behalf. If we sin, because of what Jesus paid for with His blood, God always forgives us. No one else can do this, only Jesus. He paid the price. The Hebrew writer says that because Jesus is always interceding, He can completely save those who come to God through Him.

Hebrews 7: "[25]Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, ***since He always lives to make intercession for them****."*

"Always" means 24 hours a day, every day. This means Jesus never forgets His work. Therefore, every hour of sinning, Jesus is interceding with His blood and death. So the judgment or condemnation has been removed from me.

Romans 8: "[1]There is ***therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus****, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*

So every time we sin, Satan brings us to courtroom. But since God accepted the sacrifice of His Son as sufficient and always fresh, thus the debt I owe uplifted from me. Do not be deceived; Satan does have evidence. For sure we committed sins. We continue to sin. When God wants to judge death, Jesus shows the receipt of the debt He paid on the cross and His death certificate. We are freed and justified. That is why Colossians 2:14 says he canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

*Colossians 2: "[14]****having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross****…"*

- Anyone who is in Jesus has no condemnation—forever!
- **Forever???**

Rejoice that your name is written in heaven -------3

John 17: "[3]And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.."

What does eternal life mean? Jesus says that eternal life is knowing God. Jesus gave Himself for us so that we might have eternal life. Eternity is, of course, a measure of time without end. Eternal is not just a word; the life given to us is eternal — it has no beginning or end. This means the life never ceases. If the life given to us were to perish, it would only do so at the appointed time, until then it remains life. For example, a man was in great trouble because of adultery. After believing in Jesus, he gave up his sin. But he could not endure it and returned to that life. If this adulterous man's given eternal life is taken away when he repeatedly commits adultery, John 3:16 should be corrected and written for him like this:

John 3: "[16]For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should perish and have a life till he commits adultery again and again."

Eternal life is truly eternal. It is not given by works but by faith. We were given eternal life to live forever, not to perish. There is no God who gives life to His chosen children only to let them perish. Rather, God is a God who neither sleeps nor slumbers. Some people ask, "What if my faith falters? What if I deny the faith I proclaimed" The Bible assures us that even if we are faithless, He remains faithful.

*2 Timothy 2: "[13]**If we are faithless, He remains faithful**; He cannot deny Himself. Approved and Disapproved Workers….."*

This means that the eternal life God gave us through His Son whether we falter or not, he is faithful to secure it. It will be kept forever. It will not be lost even if we fail. He is faithful forever. The One who saved us will never reject or abandon us. His word will never say, "You are not my child." With same mouth he call us my child. Just as one mouth cannot produce both bitter and sweet water, what is born of God will not perish. We are not bought by gold or silver. Our salvation is secured by His precious blood. We are born of an incorruptible seed, born into the kingdom of God by the living Word. Paul 1 Corinthians calls us to observe the nature:

1 Corinthians 15: "[39]All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. [40]There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. [41]There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory."

Let us understand nature! consider a child born from 15 to 20 minutes of physical union. This child carries the DNA of both mother and father and will not perish. Among the most brutal leaders in history—Hitler, Mao, and Stalin—who caused the deaths of over 65 million people, their parents' genetic heritage was preserved in their children. Even if their parents deny, their seed remains within them, with over 95% of their parents' DNA present. Jesus, fully aware of our sinfulness, died for us. When we believe, He places His seed within us. If our seed is not lost in a child born in 15 minutes of sexual intercourse, how can the seed of Jesus, who born us on the cross, be lost?

*1 John 3: "[8]He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. [9]**Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. The Imperative of Love**"*

His seed is His Spirit. The Spirit and life given to us cannot be separated from us. The Spirit of God and life are with us forever.

Once we are saved we won't perish! So shall we live as we please?

Once and for all, Jesus died on the cross for sins. So should we do whatever we want? The answer is no. There are two reasons for that. One there is no new grace that will be revealed to save us from sin since Jesus died for our sin once and for all. Paul speaks about how sin abounds and how Jesus is revealed to defeat the power of sin. Does this mean that we shall live in sin for more grace to come? No.

*Romans 6: "[1]**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? [2]Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it**?"*

There is no grace greater than that of Jesus. God has set us free from sin so that we may live in the likeness of Jesus. Grace is fully given to us through His Son. I have a purpose for which I was created, a purpose God planned before the world was made.

*Ephesians 2: "[10]**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.** Brought Near by His Blood…"*

Secondly, a person who accepts Jesus as their personal Savior does not only receive Him for earthly life but for eternal life. At the end of time, we will receive the reward from Jesus. We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- "Wait, didn't you say Jesus has taken our judgment? What are you talking about, man?

Yes, Jesus conquered the eternal judgment of death. The Bible tells us that there are two kinds of judgment to come. Although another book could be written on this, I will try to explain briefly. God has appointed a time for the world. This time is divided into segments, like a clock is divided to keep time. The time is counting down. The next time segment is called the rapture.

*1 Thessalonians 4: "[17]Then we **who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord…."*

Though we do not know exactly when it will happen, it will come suddenly, and there are signs that will precede it. So, who will be raptured? All who believe in the Son, Jesus, will be taken to heaven. Those who do not believe will remain here. Then, during the seven years of tribulation on earth, those left will endure great suffering. Those who were raptured, who believed in Jesus and died, will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

*2 Corinthians 5: "[10]**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, **that each one may receive the things done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad…."*

Therefore, this judgment seat is not about entering or not entering the kingdom of heaven. Those who believe in Jesus have already entered the kingdom of heaven. The judgment is about evaluating the life lived from the day of faith/from the day we accepted Jesus as our lord and savior until death or the rapture day, to give the reward. We are children of God, and every child is an heir.

*Romans 8: " [17]**and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. From Suffering to Glory…"*

An heir requires an inheritance. Jesus will give us what we deserve. What we receive will match how we lived. The payment is in His hands.

*Revelation 22: "[12]"And **behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me**, **to give to every one according to his work**…."*

So, we will receive this reward from Him. All our works will be tested by fire. He who build his work on Good material and sustain the fire shall receive the reward, if it doesn't sustain he takes his ashes.

*1 Corinthians 3: "[12]**Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, [13]each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.** [14]If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. [15]If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire…."*

So, how can we live as we please when our life is to be tested before the King? Rather, we must live for Him. We strive to receive the reward. We have already entered through Jesus. The reward depends on our deeds and our faithfulness. The second judgment is called the white throne judgment. It concerns those who did not believe in Jesus. So I leave it.

Conclusion

Galatians 6: "[14]But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world…."

This is indeed a great blessing. Far be it from us! Anything aprart from Jesus Christ Cross from where we were justified, sanctified, redeemed, propitiated, paid our debts, received eternal life, was delivered from destruction, was freed by eternal high priesthood and mediator, where the curse of Adam was taken away, from which our Passover sheep were sacrificed once and for all, from which we have won eternal death, where the fullness of his grace has been revealed, from which we have become a chosen people, from whom we have been appointed holy people and priests of his kingdom; from whom we have been called brothers, enslaved by faith, and citizens of the kingdom of God.

John 5: "[24]"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life…"

A Repentance Request and Prayer for a Non-Believer Who Wants to Accept Jesus

If you have come to a point where you recognize your need for forgiveness, peace, and truth, and you now believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God — that He died for your sins and rose again — then you can turn to Him today.

This is not about religion or perfection. It's about receiving grace and beginning a relationship with the God who created you and loves you.

If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you can pray the following prayer sincerely from your heart:

Prayer of Repentance and Faith in Jesus

Lord Jesus,
I confess that I have lived without You and have gone my own way. I am a sinner in need of forgiveness.
Today, I turn from my unbelief and ask You to forgive me for all my sins — the things I've done, thought, and failed to do that have separated me from God.

I believe You are the Son of God. I believe You died on the cross for me and rose again to give me eternal life.
Right now, I open my heart to You. I receive You as my Lord and my Savior. Come into my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Make me new.

I want to follow You from this day forward. Teach me, and guide me

In Your name, Jesus, I pray.
Amen.